(c) the rule under which the indenting of items by trade name is allowed and does it amount to promoting the sale of a particular brand by Government; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure the discontinuance of the procedure forthwith and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Kendriya Bhandar, Super Bazar and NCCF have reported that they are selling thousands of items to a large number of Government offices. Since a large number of indents are involved, to compile the information will involve heavy man power and is a time consuming process which may not be comsumerated with the results to be achieved thereof.

(c) All three organisations procure and supply all such items which are needed and indented by Ministries, Government Departments and its undertakings. However, efforts are made to appraise the indentor of all the available brands of the items. There is no intention on their part of promoting sale of a particular brand.

(d) In view of the position explbined in part (c) above, Question does not trise.

Steps to Check Rising Prices

791. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has not been able to check the increase in the prices causing insurmountable difficulties to the common man;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether any concrete steps|proposals are under consideration of Government-to give some relief to the commonman?

THE MINISTER OF CIVII SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) The Government has accorded the highest priority to check the rise in the prices in general and of essentiaj commodities in particular, Necessary measures are also being taken to augment their suppliers.

(b) The rise in the prices of certain essential commodities like pulses, edible oils etc; is due to various factors but the existing gap between their demand and supply is the major factor.

(c) Apart from taking certain long-term measures for increasing the production of commodities which are in short supply, immediate measures taken by the Government to augment the availtbility of these items include their imports. Further, items like rice, wheat, palmolein, sugar, kerosene and soft coke are distributed through the Publit Distribution System at prices below the open market priles State Governments|UT Administrations have been requested to supply other essential commodities like pulses, note books etc. througt fair price shops. Stringent actions are being taken against bltck marketeers, hoarders and those indulging in unfair trade practices under Essential Commodities Act and Frevention of Bltck Marketing Act etc. A close watch is kept on the availability and price levels of essential commodities so as to enable the Government to take timely remedial measures for checking rise in prices.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HFALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. SILVERA):

792. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMFR AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of consumer items like laundry soaps, battery cells, torches, biscuits, toothpastes, bathing